

Circle narchy in Atlanta

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Revolutionary
Anarchist Affinity
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interest of
encouraging you to
spread the circle 

Edited by Spider Rainbow



from impossible books

NORMAN MAYER MEMORIAL ISSUE

THE ANARCHIST PRESS DEBATES VIOLENCE, DIRECT ACTION
AND CONFRONTATION WITH THE STATE TERRORIST APPARATUS



POPULAR MISCONCEPTION
OF TYPICAL ANARCHIST



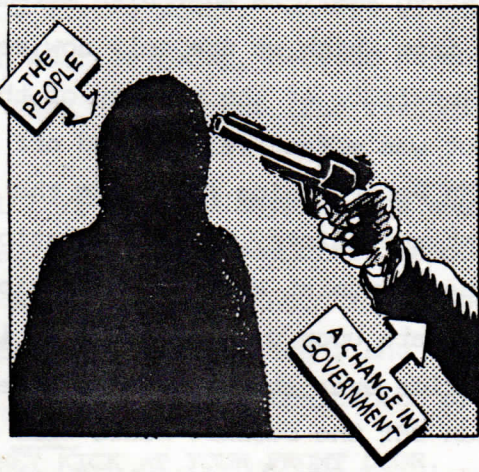
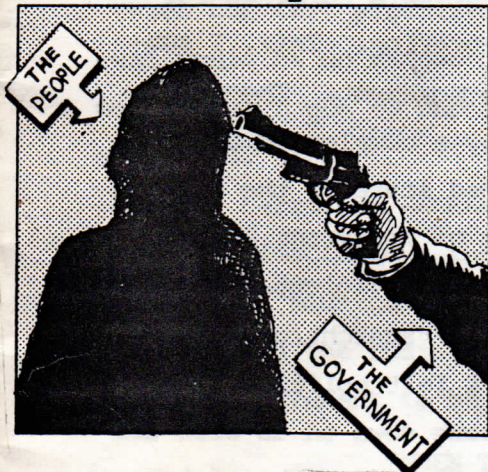
ACTUAL ANARCHISTS
IN REAL LIFE.

from Anarchy Comics

**COME ON AMERICA,
DARE TO THINK THE
UNTHINKABLE!**



Democracy



Cartoon by POLITICAL GRAPHICS, Final Notice Productions, c/o 3227
E. 29th Ave., Vancouver BC CANADA



James Edwards

'I hope we never have to get
into another war. If we do, I
want to come out No. 1, not
No. 2'

IN this issue -

D.R. CARRA ON SEX  AND REVOLUTION 

DIRECT ACTION - WEATHER UNDERGROUND 1983 ?

By Spider Rainbow

On June 19th, and again on October 14th, 1982, the Canadian clandestine armed struggle organization Direct Action carried out sabotage bombing operations against nuclear weaponry - related strategic targets, British Columbia Hydro's Dunsmuir nuclear substation and Litton Systems Canada's Rexdale, Ontario facility, a production plant for the Cruise Missile guidance system.

Like the actions of the American Weather Underground in the early 1970s, the targets of these actions were property rather than people (in contrast to European and Middle Eastern underground organizations). Sadly, like Weather before it, people (inevitably) became involved when seven were injured in the October 14th blast, which also inflicted 5 million dollars in material damages ~~on~~ the Litton facility.

Unlike the Marxist-Leninist authoritarian rhetoric that issued from Weather in the '70s, the tone of Direct Action's communications clearly were of an anarchist or libertarian left cast. Predictably, a wave of repressive measures on the part of the real terrorists, the Canadian government, followed, directed against the peace movement in Canada in general and anarchists in particular. Eventually, five Vancouver anarchists were arrested on January 22nd, 1983 on a variety of charges, strangely including the "Wimmin's Fire Brigade" firebombings of pornographic book stores in British Columbia, November 22nd, 1982. The latter were of a somewhat different character than the Litton and B.C. Hydro bombings and were not, to our present knowledge, claimed by Direct Action. The five, however, were alleged to be linked to the Direct Action group.

Anarchists have long debated the questions of direct action, non-violent or otherwise, with strong feelings running on all sides. Some feel that the desperate acts of a few during the hey-day of the earlier North American anarchist movement were to blame for the movement's decline and setback from which we are only now recovering. This, I submit, is nonsense to anyone with a knowledge of the history of the movement. The early twentieth century anarchist movement was effectively killed off by a complex combination of factors including the red-baiting Palmer raids following the red scare of the Russian Revolution, deportation of immigrant anarchists, the assimilation of immigrant groups and the false promise offered by the Communist Party. The notion that violent acts will simply bring down the wrath of the state upon us represents a timid "anarchtrotskyism". If the anarchist movement in North America ever starts to make itself felt politically by peaceful means or otherwise, you can BET the fascist state will come down on us with all its might a fury. To expect otherwise is crunchy granola foolishness, unworthy of true revolutionaries, be they pacifist or direct actionists. By the same token, though, others may be so exasperated and desperate that they may see any act of violence and even terrorism as ok as long as it is directed against the corporate state. We grimly recall Weather's one-time enthusiasm for the insane brutalities of the Charles Manson psychopathic

"family" or the SLA's kidnapping of Patty Hurst. Anarchists today run the gamut from Ghandian pacifists, through the "strategic nonviolent" such as those who participated in the actions of the Coalition for Direct Action at Seabrook (CDAS), to those ready for, or engaged in clandestine armed actions against the state now.

For my own part, I can see no way that the existing system of tyranny which hangs us daily on the brink of nuclear destruction will give way without open confrontation. To act against this madness is beyond question. When and where and how to act is much more subject to debate.

To condemn Direct Action outright in any general way is unthinkable to me. I speak here not for my affinity group, RAAG, nor for the staff of Circle (A) magazine, nor anyone but myself. As the group "indirect action" put it so well in a leaflet, "We do not glamorize the guerrilla tactics of which the five are accused - rather we understand that a response to immediate threats to our well-being and survival is the desire to act.....it is no grand leap to understand why others choose tactics of a more direct nature."

Armed struggle against fascist tyranny is not ipso facto terrorism, though ill-considered actions clearly can become such. Ideally, clandestine organizations such as Direct Action and the mass movement should complement one another, not conflict. To do so the former must take care regarding both the strategic and ethical factors involved in any actions taken, and must constantly be informed by the voices of the mass movement. They must constantly be on guard against the tendencies to fall into elitism, vanguardism and terrorism.

Meanwhile, the newsstands fill with "action" oriented publications of the hard right such as Soldier of Fortune, Eagle and Combat Ready. The Ku Klux Klan and large fundamentalist groups all across the continent arm to the teeth and run paramilitary training camps. The clock ticks, megatonnage increases, the megastate expands. The only three truly large terrorist organizations I know of in North America are the Canadian government, the U.S. government and the Mexican government.

"When the left organizes a firing squad," an old slogan goes, "they form it in a circle". That would be no danger in America today, because no one in the firing party of the left would have a gun to shoot each other with. The lessons of Chile and Poland appear to be unlearned.

I think terrorism -- REAL terrorism by anyone, for any reason, is not simply stupid but obscenely fascistic. Then, too, I have boundless respect for the courageous activist pacifism of a Ghandi or a Martin Luther King. I have no respect at all for the timid who want to keep the resistance to tyranny "clean", and I consider an unarmed and unresisting anarchist movement to be, at best, a poor imitation of the real thing.

"WHEN THEY KICK AT YOUR FRONT DOOR,
HOW YOU GONNA COME;
WITH YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD
OR ON THE TRIGGER OF YOUR GUN?"

- the clash

Deane Hinton, USA ambassador to El Salvador, also defended the American military aid. "What we have to do is make sure these people (government troops) do not run out of ammunition," Hinton said on ABC's *This Week with David Brinkley*.

regarding "terrorism"

While the state picks on five politically active individuals in an attempt to quash Direct Action, the real terrorist/criminals go untried; accumulating ever greater profits — posing ever greater threats to survival.

The quick and active local support for the five Vancouver individuals shows that people fear this continuing war-mongering, environmental rape and misogyny more than they fear the possible reprisals to themselves as a result of their support. We are not willing to stand back and let the state define the direction and tactics of resistance to the atrocities perpetrated by Capital — and we are not willing to accept that our little 'guns' are more dangerous than their big ones.

The issues clearly spoken to by the actions and statements for which these five are accused reaffirmed our commitment to resistance, even if our tactics are generally less militant.

We do not glamorize the guerrilla tactics of which the five are accused — rather we understand that a response to immediate threats to our well-being and survival is the desire to **act**. For years we have been organizing peace coalitions, petitioning, leafletting, lobbying and demonstrating — and though our numbers have grown, many of us are frustrated by the apparent lack of effect on the powers-that-be. From these experiences it is no grand leap to understanding why others choose tactics of a more direct nature.

Our will to resist will only increase as the accused "terrorists" are processed through the "justice" system, as in an unjust society the just act is often illegal.

We urge our friends in the resistance movement to discuss the issues seriously, and for active groups to voice their concern for the fate of these individuals.

indirect action

DIRECT ACTION BOMBS LITTON

On October 14 a bomb blast ripped apart a production building at the Litton Systems Canada Ltd. plant in Rexdale, Ontario, causing an estimated \$5 million in damage. The group Direct Action claimed responsibility for the bombing, which also injured seven people.

Direct Action is apparently the same group that claimed responsibility for the bombing of power transformers on Vancouver Island in British Columbia (see the June 19, 1982 FE for Direct Action's communique and our comments on it). This time, seven people were injured, due to the bomber's mistakes and the apparent incompetence of Litton's security personnel.

In their "Statement Regarding the October 14 Litton Bombing," Direct Action states that they sincerely regret the injuries caused in the action, but that they do not regret their decision to bomb the Litton plant, production facility for the Cruise Missile guidance system. They identify a number of mistakes they made that led to the unwanted injuries. They also "strongly criticize" the Litton security guards for their "handling" of the incident, listing several things the guards "should" have done so as to prevent injuries. But this criticism strikes me as dubious, because it requires that the security guards, who through no fault of their own either panicked or were never properly trained for the eventuality of a bombing, act in a coordinated manner to guarantee the safety of plant employees; this is really asking a lot of people whose reliability is impossible to guarantee.

As for the reason they undertook the bombing, Direct Action writes in their statement received by the Fifth Estate, "Nuclear war is beyond question the ultimate expression of the negative characteristics of Western Civilization. Its roots lie deep within centuries of patriarchy, racism, imperialism, class domination and all other forms of violence and oppression that have scarred human history. As well, nuclear war expresses, in the most horrendous way, the general trend of modern technological civilization toward extinction—either by war or ecological destruction. It points out, with terrorizing finality, that unless people can stop the men that dominate societies around the world—the men who use science and technology for war and profit—then the intricate natural world as we know it will cease to exist."

Direct Action also states that they have no illusions that direct action in and of itself can halt nuclear madness, but they are convinced that it can be a

"springboard to the kind of consciousness and organization that must be developed" if we are to do so. They call upon "the already radical sectors of the movement for liberation and nuclear sanity [to] recognize that direct action and militant resistance can weaken the enemy now and [complement] the movement's strategic long-term efforts to transform the consciousness of the people. We believe that, if under-

taken seriously and well-supported throughout the existing movement, widely practised militant resistance and sabotage will become effective in slowing down the clock of death and inspire the people to respond to the threats to our survival with urgency, vitality and clarity."

According to an article on Direct Action in the November 6 *Toronto Globe and Mail*, their activities have re-opened a debate among anarchists about the merits of this kind of resistance. Most anarchists interviewed in Toronto and Vancouver by the *Globe and Mail* reporter apparently agreed that the group was anarchist influenced; several were sympathetic to the group's aims. There are, however, certainly many anarchists who disagree with Direct Action's approach. The article opined that the majority of anarchists are non-violent, and that anarchism has suffered from its terrorist image. And in a letter printed in the October 15 issue of *Strike: "The Newspaper Dedicated to Direct Action"* (though apparently not *this* Direct Action, whom they strongly criticize in their most recent issue), a Canadian anarchist contends that Direct Action was created by the police to discredit the growing movement against the Vancouver Island power project, which was the target of the group's first action.

Although I don't know any more about Direct Action than this anarchist does, I find his accusation that they are police provocateurs irresponsible. It is one thing to argue (as he also does), that Direct Action's effect is to discredit the anti-power (or anti-nuclear) movement; another thing altogether to accuse people, who may or may not be misguided in their decision as to how to act, of being cops, while producing nothing but the flimsiest of gossip and circumstantial evidence to substantiate the charge. It is, after all, another well-known police tactic to accuse others of being police provocateurs — and this kind of groundless accusation and counter-accusation can go on indefinitely.

As far as circumstantial evidence goes, if Direct Action is a police provocation, then the cops have hired on a writer who is well schooled in libertarian ideas. While I disagree with a considerable part of their analysis, it is grounded in a fairly sophisticated theoretical perspective; and their writing strikes me as a markedly non-rhetorical example of the "communique" genre: are the cops capable of this kind of writing?

And what do I think about Direct Action's activity? I find it extremely difficult to make a definitive judgment about them. On the one hand, I am not at all persuaded by the usual anarchist dismissals. The anarchist who wrote the letter referred to above claims: "Despite all the illusion the present upsurge in radical action will sooner or later pass. What is important is the residue of solid organisations and tradition that it will leave. The libertarian left has a slim chance . . . of

coming out as the dominant ideology on the left, finally displacing a decaying Marxism. If, however, we allow our tendency to be associated with nonsense such as the BC Hydro bombing we will reduce this slim chance to nothing. Our ability to replace Marxism will depend on our ability to make anarchism attractive to the average individual, the individual that the would-be terrorists like to feel oh-so-superior-to." This anarcho-politician, who values "solid organizations" above activity, who wants to secure the hegemony of his reified ideology over the equally reified concepts of Marxism, will never understand that radical ideas are the living thought of people in struggle, not commodities packaged and presented, squeaky-clean, to passive "average individuals" as their salvation.

One of the most intriguing things about Direct Action is that they don't want to be professional revolutionaries. One of the anarchists quoted in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* article says that "Part of the strategy is that anybody can do this, that 'we aren't professionals.' They'd say that anybody who wanted could sit down for a couple of weeks and learn about explosives." Or, as the police are reported as viewing it, "Direct Action is not so much a political organization but a philosophy and tactic that anybody can be part of." If this is true, then Direct Action can be set apart from almost every other contemporary group that has tried to act on similar terrain. Most of these groups have seen themselves, explicitly or implicitly, as a vanguard or strategic center of revolution, whence has derived their predictable authoritarianism.

There is, however, another side to Direct Action, possibly their dominant side. Too often, it sounds as if Direct Action does envision itself as some kind of vanguard. This is most apparent in their statement that militant action is the "springboard" to consciousness and organization, and in their assumption that the consciousness of the people must be transformed by the radical movement, that people must "wake up" to the reality of their imminent destruction. If Direct Action understands this "waking up" to be a dialectical process, if they understand it to mean that people will develop, in the course of their own struggles, an awareness of what forces they are opposing, of what must be done to overcome them, and what is a desirable vision of a new life, then I agree with them. If this is what Direct Action has in mind, then they will realize that any form of direct action must be an organic expression of a particular struggle—determined by the actual participants in relation to what they are trying to accomplish and with due consideration of the risks involved, the appropriateness of the means to the end, etc. It must not be a component of some overarching strategy, abstractly conceived, to create that struggle.

This distinction is crucial. This is not a moral argument against sabotage. I think of the wrecking of power lines in Minnesota, which was the culmination of a long struggle against the stringing of these lines across the lands of rural Minnesotans, and was undertaken by the participants (or so I assume). Direct Action's bombings, on the other hand, appear to the participants in the struggles to which they were connected to have come out of nowhere, to have been the project of mysterious "outsiders."

This is what bothers me about Direct Action. They haven't chosen their terrain of struggle, and the accompanying means, strictly in accordance with a self-determined goal. They also, and more importantly to them, want to "wake up" the people, to imbue them with revolutionary consciousness. This is the real meaning of their bombings, aside from any consideration of "slowing down the clock of death," which strikes me as a rather unlikely eventuality, given the obvious weaknesses of the (barely) existing libertarian movement in the face of what must be done to overturn this society. The bombings are not only Direct Action's way of striking back at the instruments of death; they are also their mass media (or their way of commanding the attention of the existing mass media), their means of conveying their revolutionary message. And like television, the mass medium par excellence, the form and intentionality of their activity not only presuppose, but likely reinforce passivity.

It seems to me that spectacular actions like Direct Action's bombings, removed from a context of widespread activity, unclearly related to a specific goal, and not subject to debate and reflection by all the participants in the struggle, are easily codified by the media in accordance with the dominant capitalist ideology: bombings are the acts of "lunatics"; violence is employed exclusively by "terrorists." To engage in "symbolic" actions in competition with the mass media is to play into the hands of an awesome force, to play a game that cannot be won. And worst of all, the "audience" is reinforced in the belief that "acts" are something created by others and broadcast to them via the airwaves or via the shockwaves of a bombing.

—Bob Brubaker

B.C. Arrests

By Alexander Bazarov

On January 22, 1983 five political activists allegedly belonging to the group, Direct Action which claimed responsibility for the bombings of B.C. Hydro's Dunsmuir nuclear substation and Litton (cruise missile) Systems in Rexdale were arrested near Squamish, British Columbia.

The arrest of these five individuals was preceded by a campaign of systematic police intimidation and persecution against the radical segment of the peace movement across the country. As early as December 6, 1983, police in Toronto had already attempted to frame Ivan LeCouvie, a member of World Emergency Peterborough for the Litton bombing. LeCouvie was arrested in the washroom of a theatre and threatened with a charge of attempted murder and a mandatory sentence of 6 years imprisonment. Although the charge was later dropped, the state, nevertheless, attempted to prove the existence of a "Soviet Conspiracy". A series of raids and seizure of offices and homes of individuals of the peace movement in Toronto was to follow this Orwellian nightmare.

If we situate the arrest of the Five within the context of a general mobilization of state repression, the activities of the policing forces (don't forget the involvement of the CIA and FBI) and the sensationalism created by the entire news establishment, become immediately apparent.

First, the externally imposed division between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' forms of protest, non-violent and violent resistance, legal and illegal modes of behaviour, obscures the common basis

from which the peace-radical-resistance movements emerged, namely, the refusal to succumb to the rule of a social order based on super-exploitation, domination and destructiveness. So long as the radical content of these movements is preserved and remains outside of the control of the established institutions, organized repression in the forms of slander, censorship, harassment, arrests and imprisonment will continue to persist. The bombings of B.C. Hydro and Litton Systems became, therefore, pretexts to intimidate members of the peace resistance movement into a state of constant fear and passivity. The logic of counter-resistance unfolds itself: Direct Action is really the source of your misery, blame them, not us!

The arrest of the five individuals in B.C. was presented by the police as a decisive "swoop" against a "nation-wide network of anarchists" (the defendants, however, do not identify themselves with that label). The terms "nation-wide" and "anarchists" were used in juxtaposition to invoke the images of organized conspiracy and violence. With a population so accustomed to the manipulation of loaded images, the news industry has little difficulty in providing materials for the morbid imagination. As in every second-rate crime movie, the most trivial becomes the most profound; acts of rebellion against inhuman social conditions are mere crimes. T.V. reporters find it 'penetrating' to report on the most intimate personal details of the five defendants. The Toronto Star (Jan. 22, 1983) considers the possession of "disguises (a band-aid, perhaps), mountaineering equipment, camping gear, cold weather clothing (!) and extremist literature" to be highly suspicious, worthy of a special report to uncover their

untold usages. This climate of conspiracy and hysteria precludes any possibility of a 'fair trial' for the five political activists. In a repressive society, justice is a euphemism for persecution. The 'due process' of law conceals the extent of its terror and sustains the illusion of a good old bourgeois democracy. The natives of this continent have experienced it all, and so have the poor non-whites, the marginals and now, the political.

In this period of witch-hunts, our collective courage and determination are more urgently needed than ever. Support for the five political prisoners in the forms of letter writing, fund-raising, personal contributions, education, etc. will make a big difference. Don't let the state bury them without opposition! For those who wish to correspond with the five directly, write to any of them: Julie Belmas, Gerry Hannah, Ann Hansen, Brent Taylor or Doug Stewart at Lower Mainland Regional Correctional Centre, Drawer O, Burnaby, B.C. V5H 3N4. Your contributions for the defense fund of the five political prisoners can be forwarded to: **Defense Fund, C/O STRIKE!**, P.O. Box 284, Main Station, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6T7.

November 15, 1982 **STRIKE!**

Bombing the Bombers

By Lazarus Jones

The seemingly hopeless struggle to stave off the nuclear apocalypse that daily threatens our existence can lead to desolation and despair. The interminable grind of organizing meetings,

marches and conferences builds a gut-level frustration that makes us want to seize the politicians, generals and industrialists by their collective necks and scream out our rage: "stop this madness! You are killing us all!" Most of us channel this anger into a renewed commitment to the day-to-day work of persuasion and organization. But, a group of individuals calling themselves Direct Action, decided to express this rage more directly in the form of a 550-pound bomb detonated in front of Litton Industries of Toronto, the manufacturers of the Cruise missile guidance system.

The resulting explosion injured seven people, one of them seriously, and devastated the front section of the factory. The mostly pacifist anti-Cruise groups immediately, and vociferously, condemned the action — with some individuals even going so far as to express the hope that the "offenders" would soon be "brought to justice."

The October 14 bombing of Litton was the second action of the group calling itself Direct Action. On May 31 of this year a B.C. Hydro sub-station on Vancouver Island was dynamited by what is assumed to be the same group. The sub-station was part of a Hydro project that threatened to open up the Vancouver Island wilderness to industrial development. Because of the libertarian flavour of the group's two communiques and their choice of name, police in Vancouver have attempted to link the actions to the Anarchist movement. Apparently though they are having a hard time making the frame fit as, in a backhanded compliment, Inspector Edward Wilson of the RCMP claimed that Anarchist groups are as hard "to infiltrate (as) the bikers."

As anti-militarists, rather than pacifists, Anarchists do not categorically reject armed struggle. Under some circumstances, and under certain conditions, armed struggle is valid and even necessary. Unfortunately the individuals who comprise Direct Action seem to have taken no account of the necessary conditions and circumstances. They are, in fact, operating under several dangerous and perhaps fatal delusions.

In the wake of the bombing Direct Action issued a 9-page communique. The first three pages were an apology for the injuries caused

by the blast, blamed partly on their own shortcomings and partly on the incompetent reaction of the police and Litton's security force. The remaining six pages consisted of their statement on why the action was staged.

Direct Action's statement on the injuries caused by the bombing is both deluded and equivocal. They claim to "sincerely regret that any injuries occurred as a result of the action."

This is probably true. I would only suggest that Direct Action reflect on the fact that by taking the course they seem to have chosen they must be prepared to kill and maim. No amount of "sincere regrets" or precautionary measures can obscure the fact that if you go around planting bombs there is a reasonable likelihood that people will eventually be injured or killed.

February 25, 1983

STRIKE!

If Direct Action is not prepared to accept this they should cease their operations.

But, despite their expressed regrets, in the next breath Direct Action seek to justify themselves by "putting this tragedy into proper perspective." This involves balancing the injuries caused by the blast with the threat of nuclear annihilation, industrial accidents and starvation deaths related to war preparations. This is a familiar and repugnant argument. It implies murder in the name of a self-defined "greater good"; the rights of the collectivity over those of the individual. I would submit that with this kind of logic the step toward justifying deliberate killing is an exceedingly short one.

Direct Action's statement on the bombing itself is the usual blend of poorly written and thought-out analysis, vanguardist guerillaism and a thinly veiled contempt for the motives of anyone who might disagree with their strategy. The standard themes of the urban guerilla are reprised: the State as a repressive institution that can be fought; the urgent need to "action now"; the notion of the exemplary act and the necessity of goading the masses into movement. Despite the thin veneer of libertarian phraseology the basic authoritarianism of Direct Action's politics comes through loud and clear.

No one would deny that the State is oppressive or that it needs to be fought, but, as the authors of the Australian pamphlet *You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship* put it: "the essence of revolution is not armed confrontation with the state but the nature of the movement that backs it up, and this will depend on the kinds of relationships and ideas amongst the people in the groups, community councils, workers' councils, etc. that emerge in the social conflict." If armed struggle is to be pursued it absolutely must spring from an already existent combative mass movement and be responsible to it. There is no way around this — at least not for Anarchists.

No isolated group can 'point the way' or 'lead by example.' To do so is to substitute the activity of the vanguard for the mass action of the people. The overthrow of the State is a necessary but not sufficient requirement of the Anarchist revolution. What matters is *how* it is overthrown and the nature of the social dynamic leading to the State's dissolution. The staging of exemplary spectacles for passive consumption, with the vague hope of imitation and general consciousness raising, only reinforces the passivity of the masses. Even if the challenge is taken up the only real result, as the European experience has shown, is an expansion of the vanguard and the reinforcement of the basic elitism of the guerilla and his/her contempt for those who refuse the path of revolutionary suicide.

These attitudes are already almost fully formed within Direct Action and it is worth quoting the relevant passage in their communique in full:

"While we have no illusions that direct action, such as this one, can by themselves bring about the end of Canada's role as a resource based economic and military functionary of Western imperialism, we do believe that militant direct actions are valid and necessary. Militant direct actions can have a constructive function both as springboards to the kind of consciousness and organization that must be developed if we are to overcome the nuclear

masters, and as an effective tool of resistance now. Whether they will or not depends on the integrity of the existing movement to develop the commitment and courage to carry the struggle beyond legality and the personal security and privilege of comfortable lifestyles still aspired to, and attainable, by middle-class dissidents in North America."

When all else fails there's nothing like a little liberal guilt-tripping to get results. If you are not willing to "give your life to the revolution" at the drop of a hat you are obviously nothing but a middle-class coward. The connection between this macho strutting and Anarchism positively defies me.

If the individuals, groups and institutions behind the war machine have their way the entire world will look like Litton's front yard. No one with a shred of commitment to militant anti-militarism will shed any tears for Litton or join in the jackal chorus clamouring for Direct Action's blood. We should have absolutely no illusions about who the real terrorists in this situation are.

But, if we do not condemn Direct Action, neither should we support them. Their actions, even if they were well intentioned, are a diversion and their strategy for social change is fundamentally flawed. If our aim is mass action to sabotage the war machine the only road to follow is the slow patient route of education and tireless organization. In the absence of an active and vital mass movement armed struggle can only lead to isolation, demobilization and ultimately irrelevance.



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Sects grow, arm at alarming rate, defectors report

United Press International

SAN FRANCISCO

Ultra-fundamentalist sects are growing at an alarming rate in the United States and many of them are developing characteristics "chillingly similar" to the Peoples Temple before the Jonestown tragedy, a leading cult psychologist says.

Defectors in increasing numbers report that the groups are heavily armed and many of them are training in warfare in the belief the "great tribulation" is at hand in which they must fight to defend themselves and their supplies from outsiders whom they consider the Anti-christ.

"The warnings and appeals which I am receiving today from ex-members of these sects and the families of present members are chillingly similar to what I was hearing from concerned relatives of Peoples Temple members in the six-month period immediately preceding the Jonestown tragedy," psychologist Lowell Streiker said.

Streiker played a key role in the counseling of Peoples Temple survivors and families of survivors during the period preceding and following the November 1978 tragedy at Jonestown, Guyana, in which Congressman Leo Ryan of California and four members of his party were slain and more than 900 followers of Jim Jones took their own lives.

Later, Streiker founded the Freedom Counseling Center, based in Burlingame, Calif., which conducts worldwide cult research and counseling.

The new sects are described by Streiker as "ultra-fundamentalist, charismatic deliverance groups." He said they grew out of traditional American fundamentalist religions, but "have taken the cardinal doctrines of evangelical fundamentalism to an aberrant extreme."

"I am dealing with phenomena that are unbelievable," Streiker said. "They literally believe there are witches and that witches should be burned. We have reports from every part of the country about exorcisms taking place. A person loses his job or a cow gets sick — that is caused by a demon and has to be expelled. It's like the Dark Ages.

"Such excesses as beating a 6-month-old infant until it dies. I have seen a list recently of eight children who died in an ultra-fundamentalist group because of abuse. Children are not vaccinated. God is the only healer. They do not treat operable tumors. We are facing new outbreaks of polio."

Streiker said the sects range from as few as three people to many thousands of members.

A Vietnam War veteran who was in one of the groups told Streiker after leaving that the sect had enough weapons and ammunition to equip 20,000 troops. "He said he had been engaged in training and stockpiling weapons at various depots around the country."

Recent outbreaks of violence involving religious fanatics have occurred in Memphis, Tenn., in Arizona and other places.

Streiker said the new sects are hard to identify because some do not even give themselves a name, and most seek to remain anonymous by lying about their identity.

Members may hold regular jobs in a community, but once they join the group, it eventually takes over all their salary and property. "The members are required to follow their leader absolutely" and will give up job and home to move if told by that leader.

One of the largest organizations is described by outsiders as the "shepherding" movement. It has an estimated 30,000 members, but remains an "invisible denomination," Streiker said, because it has no name and its members deny it exists.

Streiker said the new sects, unlike the better known cults such as the Unification Church and Hare Krishna, do not usually make any effort even to appear as traditional religions. "They are more blatant in the manner in which they express their vision that they are above the law. All cults really believe they are above the law, but these ultra-fundamentalist sects have no restraint about showing it."

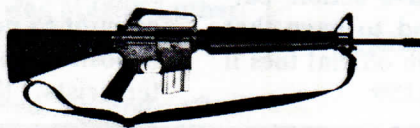
Streiker said the new sects should be "understood, addressed and stopped by the application of appropriate measures."

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TO BOMB OR NOT TO BOMB?

— That is the Question —

The following article was submitted to KIO as a self-criticism by the authors of a leaflet circulated in Toronto after the Litton bombing. We reproduce both below.

Soon after the bombing we published:

VANGUARD TERROR vs. STATE TERROR An Anarchist Critique of the Litton Bombing

The October 14th bombing of Litton Systems in Rexdale has given rise to a storm of debate about armed struggle. We would submit that there are no absolute criteria by which these acts can be judged but, in considering specific acts, there are criteria that can be applied.

First, given that any such act will invariably be used as a pretext for repression, did it accomplish anything the achievement of which might outweigh or, at least, mitigate these negative consequences? And did it lead to an increase in the self-activity of the people? Our goal is a society in which people freely manage all aspects of their lives, and how can this be brought about save by the involvement of everyone at every step in their liberation?

Violent activity that arises out of a mass movement can be an expression of people's growing self-activity. Vanguardist violence leaves people in the role of spectators. Clandestine organizations tend to become isolated from the people and to develop their own *raison d'être*. Both the terrorists and the reformists presume to know "what's best" for the people and abandon the difficult task of awakening them to the possibility and necessity of revolution.

The bombing at Litton cannot be said to have increased the self-activity of either the community or the employees at the plant in opposition to the cruise missile. The injuries suffered by seven people will no doubt make reaching these workers even more difficult. Nor did the bombing effectively sidetrack war production as the production facilities were entirely untouched. Nonetheless the RCMP, SIS, Metro Red Squad and others will use the bombing as the excuse for a "fishing expedition" and will practice a little of their own state-sponsored terror on the left.

The fact that an act brings down repression does not in itself condemn it as any effective action, particularly revolutionary action, is bound to have that effect and one cannot avoid stepping on official toes if one intends to revolutionize society.



Nor can the fact that an act is violent in and of itself be used to condemn it. We beg to differ with the U. of T. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which declares to the press that "Whether it be individuals or governments, the use of violence as a way of achieving goals is no longer possible". Condemning the violence of isolated armed struggle groups while asking people to put their faith in flyswatter referendums and the morality of profit-and-power-driven madmen is asking people to commit collective suicide. For us, the only solution is revolution. Revolution, not as a mere change of rulers but as a fundamental transformation in the values, thinking, and spirituality of millions of people.

For people of conscience, violence is always a horror and a disaster but, rather than counsel people to go peacefully to the gas chambers, we will teach the lessons of Vietnam, Chile, Poland and October 1970—that no ruling class will ever voluntarily retire from the stage of history. We do not rate very highly the chances of a violent revolution, but, if its that or killing our sisters and brothers around the world for the State, then there is only one moral choice: civil war.

In this time of mass media demagoguery, we should concentrate not on defensive apologetics, which amount to nothing more than statements of our loyal opposition to the status quo, but on exposing the real terrorists: the states wielding nuclear and con-

ventional weapons, preparing for world war while smashing (or preparing to smash) all resistance to war at home. As Noam Chomsky has pointed out, terrorism are those selected acts of violence which our rulers oppose. Those who decry and persecute "terrorists" are themselves terrorism's biggest perpetrators and collaborators.

CRITIQUE OF THE CRITIQUE OF THE LITTON BOMBING

When we wrote the document above we hadn't had time to think about the meaning of the bombing, or even to read thoroughly the Direct Action communique. What we felt had to be done was react rapidly, create an anarchist pole in the flurry of debate that the issue was raising in the peace-movement and the left generally to prevent the discussion from being monopolized by the mindless bawling of the peaceniks on the one hand and the left criticisms of "adventurism" on the other.

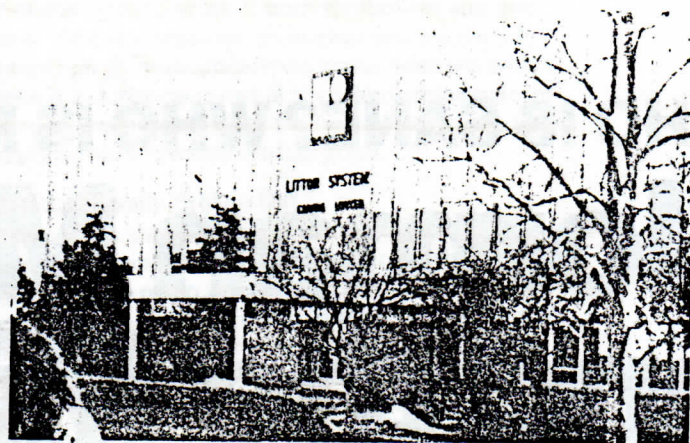
What we ended up with, because of the previous involvement of the two main authors in Leninist groups, our fear of police and state attack, and fear of our own attraction to this kind of direct action, was a document that was as much "loyal opposition" as anything the New Democratic Party might have come up with.

Our knee-jerk reaction ignored the real consequences of the action—in terms of the physical attack on the war machine, the power of example on other radical peace activists, and its power as a 'publicity gimmick' to inform people of the existence of a cruise missile plant in Toronto. We ignored our own feelings about the action and the consequences of our feelings (and those of other radical activists in the city) of pure delight, on our future activities against the war machine. We substituted ideology for reality.

We characterized the action as 'vanguardist' despite the lack of any 'party-building' orientation on the part of Direct Action. We called the action 'terrorist' despite our later quote from Chomsky that "terrorism are the acts of violence opposed by the ruling class". We lied about our feelings through not stating them and using loaded words like 'terrorist'.

Now, there are places where our instincts were fulfilled—especially in our insistence on the need for revolution and on the primacy of building towards that and avoiding sidetracks into actions that don't encourage the self-activity of people in their own liberation and in our attack on simple-minded non-violence. It seems from any study of the past that only nonviolent movements supported by violent movements have had any effect—Ghandi was backed by a radical bombing campaign as was Martin Luther King (though the bourgeoisie, in its wisdom, only show us the non-violence).

Basically our ideas have shifted around, after seeing the three major peace things since the bombing—october 17th here in Toronto, October 30th in Ottawa, and November 11th out at Litton Systems in



Rexdale. We have read and digested the Direct Action communique, and seen these events. We now believe that, though we didn't do the the bombing or help out the Direct Action group before the Litton bomb, the action was very good—there are many more radical peaceniks thinking beyond civil disobedience towards insurrection.

The bombing was a good action,
some Toronto area anarchists.



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SMASH THE STATE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!!!!

Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation

WHO IS SANE? WHO IS MAD?

Norman Mayer and the Missile X

Norman Mayer tried to stop the Missile X and failed. On the morning of December 8 the 66-year-old Miami man drove his van up to the Washington Monument, threatening to blow up the structure with 1,000 pounds of dynamite. Not interested in taking human lives, he insisted that nine people inside be evacuated. Perhaps he could have toppled that ugly stone spire resembling a hooded Ku Klux Klansman, or even broken a few windows in the White House. (In fact, a White House luncheon attended by President Reagan was moved to a room facing away from the monument grounds.) But no bombs were exploded and no White House windows broken.

A friend described him as "obsessed" by the possibility of nuclear war. "He's been reading everything printed since the 1920's," he said. "The more research he did, the more convinced he was of man's inability to resolve the conflicts." A sign on the truck said, "No. 1 Priority: Ban Nuclear Weapons," while Mayer demanded a national "dialogue on nuclear war," adding, "As an act of sanity, ban nuclear weapons or have a nice doomsday." He picked the Washington Monument because, in his words, "It's one of the sacred icons and it's accessible."

Ten hours later he was killed by murderous SWAT snipers as he pulled his truck away from the monument. There were no explosives. Unlike the officially sanctioned terrorists of the governments of the world, he could not back up his threats with force. "He died for a bluff," said one reporter.

Calling all politicians "genocidalists," he decided to take his message to the news

media, hoping they would relay it sympathetically. Obviously enough, it became a field day for cynical newspaper reporters and television commentators. Steve Komarow, a particularly smug and stupid AP reporter chosen to mediate with Mayer, wrote later, "As I stood near the white van, there was no way for me to know whether this man posed a real threat of massive destruction," blind to the irony of his words in the situation. The television media presented it all as a problem of "terrorism," portraying Mayer as a maladjusted fanatic turned lunatic turned terrorist. No one mentioned the contrast between one little man with a dummy bomb threatening all the Big Men with their thousands of Big Bombs, threatening to blow up a worthless obelisk itself resembling a missile in order to gain the attention of all the millions threatened by the genuine missiles of the State.

The "well-adjusted" responded either with indifference or by howling from their perches while rattling their chains. A young and up-and-coming necktie from some arms control organization officially denounced the older man. Instead of even decrying the act while drawing a lesson from its tenor of desperation not felt by

Norman Mayer alone—that "radical futurelessness" described by psychologist Robert Jay Lifton and felt by ten-year-olds who don't want to grow up and have children of their own because they are afraid they'll be killed in a nuclear war, among others—the spokesman chose to speak of Mayer as a "fringe" type, the kind of fanatic which reasonable, practical people would exclude from their association. No Norman Mayers for this twerp—he has a future in the arms control business, that wing of the arms machine which provides the necessary criticism to rationalize its maintenance—to keep the Missile X in operation.

Missile X—and Planet X

The MX refers specifically to the "missile experimental," or "Peacekeeper," as Reagan and his minions have dubbed it in their Wild West (or perhaps apocalyptic) fashion. But the MX is only a part, and an expendable part at that, of something greater. Nevertheless, there is something space-age and enigmatic about that title, making it a fearsome metaphor for an entire weapons system, which is itself only an integral part of that very organization of society, that *Planet X*, which makes it all possible. It is that system of domination which results in the production of that particular weapon, the MX, but which also creates countless other manifestations of its power, some not even weapons in the strict sense, though they do as much damage to the human body and spirit. The Planet X is the vast, unitary machine, made up of the thousands of weapons, innumerable computerized plans for destruction and for human domination, the massive bureaucracies, the tremendous expenditure and centralization of energy, the megatechnical projects which crush the landscape, all

the interminable chains of command. It is an ant heap growing out of control. E.P. Thompson has labeled this system "exterminism," while Lewis Mumford has described it as a megamachine. The "Peacekeeper" and other such military demons, as well as the human servants who bring them to life, are only the obelisk at the crown of an enormous pyramid, a pyramid built upside-down and teetering under its own weight. So Mayer's choice of icons was rather appropriate, certainly as good as any other.

All the seemingly unrelated parts of the machine act in a chaotic unison, each contributing directly or indirectly, each layer aware of its own immediate acts but of no others, all the strata coalescing into a gigantic organism beyond the reach of the parts, an *unknown X factor* which even the analysts cannot begin to surmise—that hairline trigger, that gamble for war, the world we won't live to see when these monsters have devoured it, the ever more terrifying discoveries emerging daily from the sorcery going on in the tiers standing alongside the sleek, riveted, voracious hull of Missile X. It is the sum of all the parts working away at the edifice of death—the daily death and the Final Death.

Life Among the "Well-adjusted"

Somehow the mass men of today have learned to live with this dread. That is what it means, among other things, to be "well-adjusted." (It is an appropriate term: one adjusts a dial on electronic equipment or a lever on machinery.) But Norman Mayer saw through the illusion and was haunted by it until he broke, going beyond the norms and shattering the taboos to attack a symbol—an icon for an icon—and was killed in reprisal for this act of rebellion by normal men, following orders somewhere down the chain of command, like the men who will launch the missiles when they are so instructed by some supervisor or machine.

Meanwhile, normal people like ourselves went about their daily routines.

As soon as Reagan announced the MX missile in November as "the right missile at the right time," as if by signal, the pseudo-opposition of anti-MX lobbyists and Freeze Campaign organizers, political realists all, went into action. How neatly it fits: while the liberals shoot at "empty silos," the other manifestations of the beast—the first strike Cruise missiles, the Trident submarines, the conventional weapons buildup, the Rapid Deployment Forces, the interventionist schemes, the registration for military conscription, the society-wide psychological preparation for war—all go on unabated. The MX opponents, siding with Congressional hawks and even members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argue the "inadequacy" of the MX as a "deterrent," calling in many cases for a conventional arms buildup or other forms of nuclear weapons, such as air-launched Cruise missiles, as an alternative.

And so the paradigm of the Planet X works in another important way. The megamachine functions as it does because all its parts only see it from their fragmented, partial perspective. A social opacity renders it invisible so that no relationships can be established between its isolated, everyday acts, its diverse sectors, and its result. The lobbyists, in similar fashion, are hypnotized by an icon, an image of the totality, a single weapon, the MX missile, while accepting the necessity of the very weapons system and the underlying social organization which give birth to it and which continue to engender other,

even more horrible monstrosities. They are practical people, so they acknowledge that the system must remain intact ("at least for now," and now is all that matters), and cannot see the relationship between the decoy missile, that trick with mirrors, and the entirety of the system, which it both symbolizes and conceals. And so opposition to nuclearism, potentially opposition to those underlying social relations which make it a reality, gets lost in the labyrinthine halls of the electoral illusion while the hydra-headed machine creaks onward towards conflagration.

War Has Already Broken Out

Hence, in a manner of speaking, their war is already in progress, not only in the peripheries where the massacres go on unceasingly, but in the very minds and spirits of the drones here in the midst of the pyramid. World War III, the Final Death, has already broken out in the culture. A mass indifference has taken hold. As long ago as 1958, C. Wright Mills signalled this indifference as "moral somnambulance," "the mute acceptance—or even unawareness—of moral atrocity." Norman Mayer tried to shake people from their passivity and moral torpor with a dramatic act, but he ended up as carrion for the media, another show. Afterwards, the culture went on blowing up abstract worlds and alien enemies on video screens in mock rehearsals for the final conflict to come.

"In the expanded world of mechanically vivified communication," wrote Mills, "the individual becomes the spectator of everything but the human witness of nothing . . . In official man there is no more human shock; in his unofficial follower there is little sense of moral issue . . . The atrocities of our time are done by men as 'functions' of a social machinery—men possessed by an abstracted view that hides from them the human beings who are their victims and, as well, their own humanity. They are inhuman acts because they are impersonal. They are not sadistic but merely businesslike; they are not aggressive but merely efficient; they are not emotional at all but technically clean-cut."

Incarnating this indifference among the "well-adjusted" we find the clean-cut administrators and technicians of the so-called "defense community," and even what one of them has called the "targeting community." No Norman Mayers here to be sure. Just scientists, academics, and bureaucrats preparing the final holocaust (and all the variations on the theme) day in and day out from their comfortable offices in the Hudson Institute, the Pentagon, and General Dynamics. One should imagine them playing tennis, picking the "right school" for their children, and infighting in bureaucratic meetings to protect or expand their turf or to get another photocopier in their office—in short, all the little things which constitute the life of privileged bureaucrats everywhere.

These are the experts who are making the incremental decisions. Neither voting referendums nor street marches touch them in their quiet laboratories and offices. Whether confronted by six lonely souls bearing pathetic placards in Red Square or a million in Central Park, they go about their business. Whether the MX is defeated or squeaks through, they map their targets and improve their rockets.

Shift From MAD to NUTS

In the years since World War II, the analysts and

experts have shifted in their theory of "deterrence" (since nobody admits to wanting a nuclear war, not even the sorcerers in the war rooms), from the model of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) to Nuclear Use Theory Strategy (NUTS). Within the context of the pyramid, these men are eminently sane and the

Norman Mayers are the kooks and fanatics.

Those who argue, such as those experts who formerly made the decisions and who now find themselves outside the inner circles, that the MX, a first-strike weapon, should be killed and the strategy of deterrence under the model of Mutually Assured Destruction be maintained, don't recognize that "deterrence" has gone the way of technology. War strategy has tailed after technological innovation, rendering MAD obsolete. The increased speed and accuracy of the missiles, and the increasingly blurred line between battlefield weapons and "ultimate" weapons, and not the changing mood of politicians, have eroded the original perspective of deterrence. When President Carter signed Presidential Directive 59 in July 1980, which called for the development of accurate first strike weaponry which could hit Soviet missiles in their silos, as well as calling for planning of so-called limited nuclear war based on the concept of "flexible response," he was only making official what technology had been doing on its own within the bowels of the megamachine. (See "Yes We Have No Mananas," October 1980 FE)

Reagan and Weinberger call this process "modernization," and that is in a sense exactly what it is. They are going to replace old weapons with newer, updated versions, whether or not they get their MX decoy in the bargain. Technology has its own laws—all must conform. Fear that the other side will attain first strike capability spurs each empire on, and both sides are without a doubt actively pursuing a first strike capability, worried that the other will achieve it first, though the Soviets appear to be way behind in the race. And since it will be the weaker partner which tends to set off the conflagration in an attempt to avoid being attacked without a chance to retaliate, Weinberger's nightmare of Soviet attack will become a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the "deterrent" prompts the attack.

Planning, Planning, Planning

And so they go on planning, planning, planning the inevitable between cocktail parties, graduations and vacations. At work, they map out new targets, or discover a new component for lift-off rockets or a more efficient fuel. One bureaucrat, itching for a promotion, writes in the official budget for fiscal 1983, "U.S. defense policies ensure our preparedness to respond to, and, if necessary, successfully fight either conventional or nuclear war." Another, (Eugene Rostow, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, to be exact), quips, "We are in a pre-war and not a post-war world." Another (Colin S. Gray of the Hudson Institute), hoping to make a name for himself in the "defense community" and hence to enter the inner circles, writes in an article titled "Victory Is Possible" in the Summer 1980 *Foreign Policy*, "If American nuclear power is to support U.S. foreign objectives, the United States must possess the ability to wage nuclear war rationally." These are the normals.

So perhaps Norman Mayer was not so crazy, since contrary to the (mathematically demonstrable) concept of the probability of inevitable accidental nuclear war, with the deliberate planning and the modernization of the equipment, *it will be an accident and a fluke if there is no nuclear war.*

In a sensitive article, "The Bureaucratization of Homocide" (in the E.P. Thompson/Dan Smith collection *Protest and Survive*), Henry T. Nash, a former intelligence analyst for the Air Force Air Targets Division, describes the daily routines of the planners succinctly, asking "What was it about Air Targets that made me insensitive to its homicidal implications? I and my colleagues, with whom I shared a large office, drank coffee, and ate lunch, never experienced guilt or self-criticism. Our office behavior was no different from that of men and women who might work for a bank or insurance company. What enabled us calmly to plan to incinerate vast numbers of unknown human beings without any sense of moral revulsion?"

But something else lies beneath Nash's questions. And that is that the inevitability of nuclear holocaust consists not only in people's willingness to continue working as war targeters, but in their capacity to continue in the banks and insurance companies as well. The fact is that if people are incapable of or unwilling to collectively overthrow the everyday conditions of domination, to stop not only the decoys but the entirety of the empires and the megastates which produce them, then they can be sure that they are destined to die in a nuclear war.

Norman Mayer was a desperate man. He decided to target an icon of imperial power, of the state, a physical structure resembling a missile. But he could not do it alone—and perhaps, given the present momentum of events, or their inertia, his particular scheme was a hopeless and quixotic one. But a world free of the nuclear terror and all the terrors which flow from the megamachine, cannot be won without such a sense of urgency, passion and despair, without demolishing the icons of domination, without disrupting the rhythm made up of the everyday reproduction of the machine at its base, without dismantling the massified technological pyramid which incarnates absolute power and its absolute weapons.

The Grim Chase Toward The Void

Lewis Mumford, comparing this quickening velocity toward the void with Captain Ahab's maniacal pursuit of Moby Dick, wrote in *The Myth of the Machine*,

"Outwardly mankind is still committed to the grim chase Melville described, lured by the adventure, the prospect of oil and whalebone, the promptings of pride, and above all by a love-rejecting pursuit of power. But it has also begun consciously to face the prospect of total annihilation, which may be brought about by the captains who now have control of the ship. Against that senseless fate every act of rebellion, every exhibition of group defiance, every assertion of the will-to-live, every display of autonomy and self-direction, at however primitive a level, diminishes the headway of the doom-threatened ship and delays the fatal moment when the White Whale will shatter its planks and drown the crew."

Let this be an epitaph for Norman Mayer. The pervasive sense of radical futurelessness which drove him to the brink and beyond is an accurate sense of the state of the world. *This civilization has no future.* And only by winning back our present, by stopping this voracious Planet X in its tracks and regaining our own Planet Earth, can we assure any future for ourselves.

—George Bradford

Fifth Estate, 4403 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48201

NORMAN MAYER DID NOT SUBMIT!

(FROM "FREEDANZINE" #38)

Our "righteous and benevolent" Father deceives us. He acts not in our interest but in His own. He leads us not to prosperity and not to salvation, but rather takes us down the path to total Destruction. Indeed, it is to feed His insatiable drive for universal annihilation that we suffer complete, blind submission.

We accept the patriarchal authoritarian state as a god-- wrongly believing this to be a timeless reality that humankind cannot overcome or transcend. In the US, "democracy" is one name we have for the self-repression of our will to freedom. It is a seemingly voluntary acceptance of bondage to Authority. This reality has been with us too long! We must bury the fallaciously self-righteous and all-powerful phallic god called Authority-- called the State.

Do not fear the end of these Fathers who drag us to destruction. All rule above us must end! Overcoming the Father is necessary to realize freedom and continue our existence-- to begin our existence. There is no place for guilt in our struggle with Authority; we must cease our worship of these false idols.

America is power-mad! With the erection of infinitely violent phallic projectiles, this State rapes and destroys the world. This must stop. We must reject society bowing to Virility as the ideal of what all should be-- embracing force, destruction and the rage to dominate. Overthrow the present repressive structures and escape all structures.

Norman Mayer accepted as his "number one priority" the elimination of the world's nuclear-tipped pricks. He threatened the symbolic castration of power-mad Washington to further the actual elimination of Authority's domination. Norman rejected the American symbols of Virility-- nuclear missiles and even the Washington monument. He asked us to welcome Life and not Power as basis for our culture. For this message, he risked and lost his life.

Nuclear weapons threaten all life and violently deny our freedom-- our freedom to live and create. They impose destruction upon us. We must respect Norman Mayer's act of resistance to this madness and not deny his sensitivity and concern. It can only be a crystal soul which compelled him to such an act of conscience.

Observations of a womyn anarchist

by D. R. Carra

Sigmund Freud once asked, "what do women want?" As usual with male experts, he asked the question in a patronizing manner, as if "woman" is a subspecies, somehow apart from the human race, with different needs and wants than those of any person.

Yet, some women are content to be simply, Woman, a subspecies. Wife, mother, sex object, the mysterious Other. Which is fine with me, except that so many of these women are not happy to simply be, they must make sure the rest of us are just like them. Women like Phyllis Schaffly, who travels all over the world telling women to stay at home. And the right wing women, who follow the line of "get big government off our backs" but only for big business - the government needs to be in the bedrooms of America to make sure no one who isn't married is doing it, or no one under 21 is doing it, or, heaven forbid, no two people of the same sex are doing whatever they do.

And there's the New Woman, who just wants a bigger piece of the pie. Not to change the system, but to have more control, more power in the system. To have buying power, to pass the E.R.A. All necessary steps. Since we do have to live in this system, it is an absolute need that women become economically independent of men. But we seem to have gone from one capitalist trap to another - from the wife staying at home while hubby works to the two career family. The question is no longer who works, but whether or not the household chores are evenly divided (they usually aren't.) It's a set up that does indeed advance the feminist cause, but also serves the capitalist system. Not only does the system use these new women as just another group of wage slaves, but seeks to use them as consumers - buy a new dress-for-success wardrobe, but don't forget you're A Woman: wear (expensive) feminine undies beneath it. And then, the economic system being what it is, the "two career family" is no longer an option, no longer a means to purchase "extras." It's a necessity. The trap is set so one salary no longer buys a house and puts food on the table. (I often wonder if "they" planned it that way...)

And then there's the rest of us. The ones who aren't satisfied with reforming the system. The ones who aren't satisfied with "getting big government off our back" - we want to get rid of government all together. We want it all. To redefine the way people relate to each other, to build a world without confining sexual roles, without sexism/classism/racism/homophobia. WE WANT revolution, nothing less.

It's all very simple. Problems with your job? Smash the state. Problems with your love life? Smash the state.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple. True, the system makes life difficult. In a materialist society, where possessiveness is a virtue and ownership is the main goal in life, where economics makes just putting groceries on the shelf a major hassle, where the state puts it's leering eyes into every bedroom, the task of building meaningful relationships is a long hard struggle.

In a propertarian society based solely on possessiveness, yes, it is difficult to get away from treating our sexual partners as possessions - "my man," "my woman". And non-monogamy is not necessarily the only answer to this problem. A monogamous relationship freely entered into by two people by mutual consent, and free of the restrictions of the state (i.e. marriage as it is defined in this society) is not necessarily against anarchist principles.

But we can, we must, start redefining relationships now, not the day after the revolution. Not to complete ourselves, for we are, each of us, both the yin and the yang, a complete circle. I am a woman, a person, I do not need a man to make me complete. But we all need to relate to each other, as friends, as lovers, in supportive ways. For our own sanity, for the struggle of building a better world.

We can't build a movement to smash the state without genuine love and understanding. United we stand, divided we fall. Yet how united are we, the gays and straights, the men and women on the left? Just how divided are we on the issue of sex and feminism?

I myself happen to have a hetero inclination. Sometimes I wish I didn't - it is so hard to make men understand. I know what I want to say to them, I know why I am angry, I know what divides us, but yet it is so difficult to find the words.

I can talk to my sisters. All we have to do is look at each other and say the word "men" and we all know what we're talking about. We have all been disappointed in men who claim to be feminists who don't even know what the word means. They do the dishes, they take care of the kids, they respect intelligent women, so they figure they're feminists. But there's a certain level at which they stop trying to delve into the deeper issues of feminism. And I find it so hard to explain to them.

The men. The men who laugh at "dirty jokes", even though a woman is the butt of the joke. Who don't think harassment of women on the street is a significant problem. Who use phrases like "women think with their ovaries." Who treat women as comrades in meetings but as just another cunt in the bedroom.

Men who aren't willing to listen because it's just not important. After all, it's just women's problems.

It's not that I don't try to talk to them. They accuse me of being too much of a hard line feminist. "You're just being too sensitive." They are arrogant. "Well, you can't live without us, ha ha." (Vibrators aren't that expensive, fella.) They get defensive. "Well, I can't help it that I'm a man. I don't like it when women get angry at men."

All obvious cop outs to avoid self examination. To avoid the issue.

So, I have gone on a one-person campaign to elevate the consciousness of all the men on the left. The first step is to get them to read "The Female Man" by Joanna Russ. It's one of the clearest statements on WHY we are angry, on why we are confused, what exactly this society does to us, as women.

One of the hardest things to get across is just basic everyday interaction between men and women. Just what is it that bothers me about the way men look at women? I like to look at people myself. So what is it that gripes me about men looking at women? Is it the fact they can't control themselves? They can't just look, they have to leer, salivate, and make comments. Or is it the thought behind the look - "I want that."

(I have often thought about the way Moslems insist that women go about covered in veils, so as not to incite the passions of men. It's the men's problem, why do the women have to suffer for it? Why don't the men have to wear blinders?)

But, so what, big deal, so men say things about you as you walk down the street. Why are you so upset.

A typical day in downtown Atlanta, I was walking along when I heard someone shouting "Hey, Red." This happens all the time, because I happen to have red hair and men yell at women in the street. So I ignored it. But something made me turn around this time, because the voice seemed familiar. It was. A male friend had seen me, and had forgotten my name. He said, "Didn't you hear me?" because he had called to me several times before I responded. I said, "Oh, it happens all the time." Suddenly it struck him that harrassment of women was real - and it's annoying and it's CONSTANT. He had always understood it on an intellectual level, but now it was hitting him on a gut level. He was amazed. So was I. These moments of total understanding don't happen often enough.

Well, the men tell us, life is rough for them, too. Yes, the system scars people. A system that rewards incompetence ignores intelligence, a system that rewards conformity tramples anyone who is different. A system that rewards wealth makes sure you blame yourself if you are not wealthy. A system that makes sex a commodity, a system that equates money and sex, a system that sets up woman as a beautiful thing for a man to aquire - yet through all this extols the "nuclear" family as the ideal.

Yes, we all grow up confused and scarred, isolated and alienated. Yet, there are special scars reserved just for women.

I would bet that at least half of all women have a gynecologist horror story. Mine is simple enough.

My period suddenly stopped when I was 14. So my mother took me to a doctor. I really felt uncomfortable about him touching me "there" - I had been told often enough not to let men touch me there. And besides that, it hurt. The doctor was extremely aggravated, and came right out and accused me of having something to hide - like maybe I was pregnant. Which wasn't even remotely possible.

Almost three years later, I struggled through another examination so I could get the pill - the magic ticket to worry-free sex. I embarked upon the adventure of losing my virginity with only the knowledge that it would hurt the first time. When it hurt the second time, and the third and on and on, I began to worry. I approached my mother and told her I wanted to see a therapist because I was having problems with sex. My mother told me that "these things work themselves out when you get married." I did finally enter therapy, but my therapist had not heard of the problem. Three long years later, I chanced upon an article in Psychology Today

concerning "sexual dysfunctions" and I finally learned that my problem had a name (vaginismus), that I was not the only woman in the world with this problem, and that it could be cured. Yes, it can be "cured", it can be dealt with, but nothing can erase those years of not knowing what was going on with my own body. It is no wonder that I cringe when people in the so-called "Moral Majority" seek to deny information about sex to young people.

Lack of information about sex serves other purposes than making young women afraid of and unable to control their own bodies. Of course, the stated purpose of keeping sex information from the young is to keep them from doing it. Obviously, this isn't working.

The mystery of the female body, supposedly a romantic concept, only further serves to set apart the woman as separate - as the other. We cannot relate to each other as people unless we explore intelligently our physical differences - and our common grounds. I am shocked at the utter lack of information among men who are "feminist." I hear them discuss the mechanics of sex with as much sensitivity as adolescent boys who have just seen their first issue of Playboy.

And then there's the men who think they know everything there is to know about the female anatomy because they have figured out that women have a clitoris. Perhaps "Our Bodies, Ourselves" should also be required reading for men.

And then there's that special terror for women. Rape. I'm not denying that men are ever raped. Nor am I saying that child molesting is less of a horror for boys than girls. But the facts remain that most cases of child molesting involve a man and a young girl, and that most rapes involve men raping women.

All women are potential rape victims - it could happen to any of us. A 21 year old woman walked into a bar in New Bedford, Massachusetts and was raped by four men for two hours while other patrons of the bar cheered them on - "Go for it."

It could've been me. It could've been any of my sisters. And yet men wonder why we are outraged. Not all men are rapists. But all rapes are committed by men. Sometimes it is hard not to react with anger towards all men. Any man we meet on the street, in a bar, even on a date, could be a rapist. It could happen any time, any place. To any woman.

We don't ask for it. We think about it often - we can't escape thinking about it. To be a woman is to live in fear.

And we are angry when we can't make men understand our outrage. When they don't share our outrage. When they make casual jokes about rape.

She asked for it. That's what she gets for wearing sexy clothes. Well, you just don't understand - men get horny.

Our outrage about rape leads to our anger at pornography. Pornography glorifies rape, glorifies brutality against women. Why must we justify to men our gut level revulsion at seeing our sisters debased, degraded, tortured, possessed and battered for the sexual titillation of men? And loving it. I'm woman, you're man - beat me, dominate me, rape me, I want it I love it I need it.

We are not being prudish or "anti-sex" when we attack pornography - an accusation made by our own brothers on the left. They don't even try to understand that our outrage is not directed towards sex, but the perpetuation of sexual stereotypes, the images of impersonal, mechanical, and often brutally violent sexual acts. We are not trying to suppress, we are trying to redefine sexual relationships.

We are also accused of just attacking pornography and ignoring the rest of the media. Why stop at pornography? Pornography and prostitution are the underside, and in some ways the honest side, of what this society promotes in the way of sexual values. Why attack just pornography when the same values are promoted in all the media - sex as a commodity used to sell everything from cars to toothpaste.

It is a misconception of the feminist movement that we aren't concerned with sexism in all facets of society, and not just pornography. But it is our attacks on pornography that have brought a torrent of anger and accusations from the left.

It is trick to fight pornography. We believe in freedom of speech, we are against censorship. As anarchy-feminists, we cannot help but to hate pornography, but we are expected to defend it in the name of free speech. And yet, do we have a choice? To allow that the government has a right to say "don't print that, it's dirty" also admits that the government has a right to say, "don't print that, it's dangerous." How can we align ourselves with the moral majority in the banning of books and movies?

The state has no right to dictate our morals. So do we take it upon ourselves then, to stop pornography? To burn bookstores, to trash movie theatres? But where does it stop? How do we define pornography? One person's erotica is another person's porn. And if we say we believe in freedom of choice, what if people do choose s/m, bondage, or whatever as a sexual practice? Do we say to them, you can't print your literature, show your movies? Shall we swap having the government in our bedrooms for having Radical Feminists in our bedrooms labeling this or that act Politically Correct or Incorrect?

Attacks on pornography have not only been misunderstood, they have been misdirected. We can not, as anarchists, defend the tactics of some of the anti-porn groups that have sprung up on the left. So what do we do? Smash the state. That always seems to be the logical answer. It is the state, our consumer society, that gives rise to pornography. To attempt to erase the symptom does nothing to effect the cause. We must - men and women - evaluate sexual relationships in this country, talk about our feelings towards pornography, define it, and work together towards building a world where pornography does not exist because no one wants it anymore.

And the beginning must be raising consciousness. That old cliché again. Start a dialogue. We must break through the isolation and alienation of the capitalist society to build supportative relationships that give us the strength to create a real and lasting revolution.

A long process, but is there any other choice?
